

# Virginia Department of Historic Resources

## PIF Resource Information Sheet

This information sheet is designed to provide the Virginia Department of Historic Resources with the necessary data to be able to evaluate the significance of the property for possible listing in the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places. This is not a formal nomination, but a necessary step in determining whether or not the property could be considered eligible for listing. Please take the time to fill in as many fields as possible. A greater number of completed fields will result in a more timely and accurate assessment. Staff assistance is available to answer any questions you have in regards to this form.

<b>General Property Information</b>	For Staff Use Only DHR ID #: 104-5075
Property Name(s): <u>Fry's Spring Beach Club</u>	
Property Date(s): <u>1890</u> xCirca <input type="checkbox"/> Pre <input type="checkbox"/> Post    Open to Public?    xYes <input type="checkbox"/> Limited <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Property Address: <u>2512 Jefferson Park Avenue</u> City: <u>Charlottesville</u> Zip: <u>22903</u>	
County or Ind. City: <u>Charlottesville</u> USGS Quad(s): <u>Charlottesville West</u>	
<b>Physical Character of General Surroundings</b>	
Acreage: <u>7.052</u> Setting (choose one): xUrban <input type="checkbox"/> Town <input type="checkbox"/> Village <input type="checkbox"/> Suburban <input type="checkbox"/> Rural <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation Corridor	
Site Description Notes/Notable Landscape Features: Fry's Spring Beach Club is a partially wooded site with undulating small hills that are utilized within the design of the beach club. The site is bordered on the north and east by Jefferson Park Avenue, on the south by Old Lynchburg Road, and on the west by the neighborhood of Jefferson Park Circle. It is the western portion of the site that contains a wooded gully with the spring for which the property was initially named and used as a site of respite. The formal designed portion of the site contains the clubhouse with the 1947 ballroom/dining hall.	
Secondary Resource Description (Briefly describe any other structures (or archaeological sites) that may contribute to the significance of the property: Secondary contributing resources on the site include the caretaker's cottage in poor condition (adjacent to the clubhouse), Fry's Spring itself now marked by a small concrete canal (located in a wooded area west of the club house), three swimming pools reconstructed in 2003 (located along Old Lynchburg Road in a similar area as the 1921 pool), and two tennis courts (located west of the clubhouse and perpendicular to one of the pools).	
Ownership Category:    xPrivate <input type="checkbox"/> Public-Local <input type="checkbox"/> Public-State <input type="checkbox"/> Public-Federal	
<b>Individual Resource Information</b>	
What was the historical use of this resource? Examples include: Dwelling, Grist Mill, Bridge, Store, Tobacco Barn, etc... <u>Private hotel and springs</u>	
What is the current use? (if other than the historical use) <u>Private social club with dancing/dining and swimming/tennis facilities</u>	
Architectural style or elements of styles: <u>General bungalow detailing with Tudor Revival (exterior) decorative elements, streamline moderne elements (interior dance hall, 1947)</u>	
Architect, builder, or original owner: <u>Jefferson Park Hotel and Land Improvement Company (original owner); G. Russell Dettor (builder 1921-1971)</u>	
# of stories <u>1.5</u> Condition: <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent    Good xFair <input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated <input type="checkbox"/> Poor <input type="checkbox"/> Ruins <input type="checkbox"/> Rebuilt <input type="checkbox"/> Renovated	
Are there any known threats to this property? <u>Ongoing site maintenance is a continuous threat to the property due to prohibitive costs associated with the historic building.</u>	

### Resource Component Information

Please answer the following questions regarding the individual components of the resource. If the component does not exist, answer “n/a.” If you feel uncomfortable in answering the question, please leave the space blank. Photographs of the features can also help our staff identify specific feature components. Usually, priority is given to describing features on the primary (front) facade of the structure.

**Foundation:** Describe the foundation that supports the structure. Examples include piers, continuous brick, poured concrete.  
**Stone, brick, poured concrete, concrete block**

**Structure:** Describe the primary structural component of the resource. Include primary material used. Examples include log, frame (sawn lumber), and brick. Also include the treatment, such as a particular brick bond or type of framing, if known.  
**Wood frame with some brick infill**

**Walls:** Describe the exterior wall covering such as beaded weatherboard or asbestos shingles.  
**Initially weatherboarded and later covered with stucco when building was upgraded; this also occurred at the caretaker's cottage**

**Windows:** Describe the number, material, and form of the primary windows. This includes the number of panes per sash, what the sashes are made of, and how the sashes operate (are they hinged or do they slide vertically) Have the windows been replaced?  
**There are five primary windows on the main façade of the club building. The majority of these windows contain 12 panes per wooden sash; the sashes are hinged and open horizontally and date to the first half of the twentieth century. Circa 1940s glass block fill some of the windows.**

**Porch:** Briefly describe the primary (front) porch. List the primary material, shape of the porch roof, and other defining details.  
**The primary, parking-lot facing, covered porch is stucco covered by a gable roof. Within this porch the entrance is marked by a series of 3 metal doors over which an eight-pane window is situated.**

**Roof:** Describe the roof, listing the shape and the covering material.  
**Gable and hipped; covered by asphalt shingles. Asphalt shingles cover the caretaker's cottage gable roof.**

**Chimney(s):** List the number of chimneys and the materials used. Include the brick bond pattern if possible.  
**There is a single, non-functioning interior chimney made of stone (base) and brick (flue). There are two additional interior stacks, servicing furnaces, made of brick. At the caretaker's cottage there is one brick exterior chimney flue.**

**Architectural Description of Individual Resource:** *(Please describe architectural patterns, types, features, additions, remodelings, or other alterations. A sketch of the current floor plan would be appreciated)* Please see floor plans for basement and first floor.

### Property:

Fry Spring's Beach Club, as it exists today, can be traced to its initial form in the late 19th century when a portion of the site was part of the Jefferson Park Hotel complex. A Sanborn Insurance map dating to 1920 depicts a “dance hall” and “motion picture theatre” as well as an earthen floor building (presumably the caretaker's cottage) on the site, then known as Jefferson or Fry's Spring Park (*Image 1*).<sup>i</sup> Jefferson Park, the hotel and pavilion, was a popular recreational destination at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>ii</sup>

On April 7, 1921 G. Russell Dettor purchased 3.16 acres of land along Lynchburg Road from Robert and Lula McElroy for \$5,000 specifically for the construction of an outdoor pool (*Image 2*). While there is no mention of buildings/structures in this deed, Dettor proceeded to construct a pool later that year and by 1924 a building value of \$1,000 was attributed to the site. It is presumed that Dettor was hoping to capitalize on the recreational sites adjacent to Fry's Spring.

By 1929 Dettor increased his holdings at Fry's Spring to 13 acres with a building value of \$3,000. This increase in value signifies the purchase of the adjacent “dance hall” and “motion picture theatre” from the Charlottesville and Albemarle Railway Company. A Sanborn Insurance map dating from 1929 and showing improvements through 1950 shows the property during this period (*Image 3*).

Throughout the 1940s and 1950s Dettor made various improvements to the property and on July 17, 1961 G. Russell Dettor transferred the property, totaling 13.58 acres, to the G. Russell Dettor Corporation.<sup>iii</sup>

This transfer details the consolidation of land purchased in the 1920s by Dettor from Robert L. McElroy (Albemarle County DB 176, page 131), Redland Land Corporation (Albemarle County DB 181, page 440) and Charlottesville and Albemarle Railway Company (Albemarle County DB 199, page 347). On June 1, 1970 G. Russel Dettor, Inc. sold 9.66 acres, the Fry's Spring Beach Club, to Fry's Spring, Inc. for \$300,000 (*Image 4*).<sup>iv</sup> In 1990, Fry's Spring, Inc. sold the property to Fry's Spring Beach Club for \$10.<sup>v</sup>

In 2013, Fry's Spring Beach Club sold 2.665 acres to the City of Charlottesville and acquired .057 acres connecting the club to Old Lynchburg Road (Charlottesville DB 2013, page 1763). The 2.665 acres included the wooded gully that includes the original spring that is now under conservation easement and has been incorporated into a recently established city park.<sup>vi</sup>

The principal resource of Fry's Spring Beach Club is the clubhouse itself. Secondary contributing resources on the site include the caretaker's cottage (adjacent to the clubhouse) (*Image 5*), Fry's Spring itself (located in a wooded area west of the club house and now owned by the City of Charlottesville) (*Image 6*), three swimming pools reconstructed in 2003 (located along Old Lynchburg Road in a similar area as the 1921 pool) (*Image 7*), and two tennis courts (located west of the clubhouse and perpendicular to one of the pools) (*Image 8*).

The caretaker's cottage, in poor condition, is of balloon framing and was originally sheathed in oak. Currently, stucco covers the sheathing; the building is sheltered by an asphalt shingle roof.

#### **Exterior:**

The prominent feature of the Fry's Spring Beach Club is the large clubhouse that is a result of significant building periods from the late 19th and first half of the 20th centuries. The clubhouse, an amalgamation of building periods, is stucco and is reminiscent of Tudor Revival due to the half timbering decoration details. Gabled dormers are located on the east and west sides of the gable end.

The oldest part of the clubhouse dates to the late nineteenth century and the Fry's Spring Park dance and movie projection building. Portions may be earlier and date to the late nineteenth century. This one-and-one-half-story, two-bay building still serves as the principal entrance and includes a lobby (*Image 9*). This portion connects to the single-story, five-bay ballroom to the east dating, in its current form, to 1947. Half timbering decorates the window and door bays in this portion that also contains glass block windows.

The site slopes such that the principal façade is on grade while the basement is above ground when facing the pool to the south (*Image 10*). The basement does not support all areas of the building, especially those that may have been added at a later date (*Image 11*). During the 1920s the principal façade of the building presumably faced the pool and was covered with weatherboard. Architectural evidence of this sheathing exists in the building (*Image 12*).

This changed during the 1940s when the building was upgraded, stuccoed, decorated with half timbering, and presumably when the large parking lot was added. Paired casement windows were most likely added at this time. Porches on the rear elevation facing the pool were seemingly enclosed with fixed sash windows that varied in form. Various paved and unpaved pathways connected the resources at Fry's Spring Beach Club (*Image 13*). However, during the 1940s the most significant, and most visible today, interior improvements occurred at Fry Spring's Beach Club.

#### **Interior:**

The earliest glimpse into the interior of the clubhouse is a 1913 photograph taken by Rufus W. Holsinger of the dance hall, or pavilion, as deemed by Holsinger (*Image 14*). Here, the dance area is open to the rafters with some radiator heating and electric lights. It also contains an interesting object that is no longer found in the club.

In the historic image on the left is a pedestaled Welte Orchestrian machine dating to 1910. The orchestrian is a machine that plays music and is designed to sound like an orchestra or band. It is not known how long the orchestrian lasted at the club after the construction of the stage, but tabletop jukeboxes can still be found in the clubhouse attic.

Just behind the orchestrian was a small bar area; this area was later converted to a dining area in 1947 as part of the most significant interior building period at the clubhouse.

The lobby area is shown sheathed in weatherboarding indicating that it may be an earlier building period, possibly dating to the late nineteenth century. The room adjacent to the lobby contains the interior stone fireplace. Both rooms were presumably a part of the pavilion in 1913 (*Images 15, 16*). The lobby of the clubhouse contains several interesting architectural features including a panel door covered by a small portico on the exterior, possibly the earliest building period entrance (*Images 17, 18*). A coat check room marked by a paneled opening as well as a possible projection area are found here.

The room adjacent to the lobby containing the interior stone fireplace leads to the 1947 ballroom and contains the entrance to the coat check room as well as two circa 1947 bathrooms paneled in masonite and containing skylights leading to attic dormers (*Images 19, 20, 21*).

By 1947 the property had undergone significant change with many resources supporting the enclosing of the dance hall or pavilion and the subsequent upgrading of the ballroom and other clubhouse rooms. In 1947 the buildings on the property were valued at \$7,500. This value rose and in 1949 the buildings were valued at \$10,500. The building value plateaued in 1953 at \$20,130 and hovered at this rate through the 1970s.

As part of the 1947 improvement, the former bar area located behind the orchestrian was converted to a dining area and larger casement windows were added affording a generous view of the pool (*Image 22*). A small, south facing porch may have also been enclosed to form the current bar area with fittings still dating to the 1940s and 1950s (*Image 23*). A small room supported by corner posts may have also been added or enclosed in this period (*Image 24*).

The ballroom is a large open space with wooden floors, built-in circular banquets along some of the walls, exposed pine-faced wood beams with a tray ceiling (*Images 25, 26, 27*). The floor is numbered to mark the location of booth in order to facilitate food and drink orders. An elevated stage is located at the east end, streamline details in the ceiling as well as light fixtures echo the architecture of the period (*Images 28, 29, 30*).

The entire building and caretaker's cottage were probably stuccoed between 1947 and 1953; Tudor decorative details were added at this time. An asphalt shingle roof and an exterior brick chimney flue were added at later dates. Details in the attic, double knee bracing of the building, the roof seeming to have been changed from pyramidal to gable, speak to these changes as do property tax records from the period (*Images 31, 32*). The assessed building value hovers around \$20,000 until 1970 when the land value increases significantly.

The basement area also underwent significant change in the 1950s. A full-kitchen was probably added at the time including a dumb waiter servicing the dining area (*Image 33*). This kitchen most likely replaced a smaller area for cooking servicing an early 20<sup>th</sup> century fountain area (*Image 34*). A club snack bar currently exists in the location of the fountain. Some architectural details from the fountain still remain intact.

In 1958 a new dining area was built downstairs, partially replacing the fountain area.<sup>vii</sup> This area contained large single glass windows and a juke box (*Image 35*). In 1961 beverage lockers were added

downstairs. These lockers still exist today. At some point, possibly in the late 1960s or 1970s, changing rooms were added in the basement.

**Significance Statement:** Briefly note any significant events, personages, and/or families associated with the property. (Detailed family genealogies are not necessary.) Please list all sources of information. It is not necessary to attach lengthy articles or genealogies to this form. Normally, only information contained on this form will be posted for consideration by the State Review Board.

Fry's Spring Beach Club is an individual resource encompassing a natural landscape as well as a designed club hosting a variety of recreational activities since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The primary architecture contained within the complex is the clubhouse itself. A dominantly horizontal building, decorated with half timbering reminiscent of Tudor Revival, the clubhouse is a somewhat seamless building from the exterior. However, interior detailing marks the various additions and remodeling that has taken place during the history of the club. The most notable remodeling of the building took place in 1947 when the earlier dance pavilion was enclosed to form the current streamline moderne ballroom that retains a level of high authenticity.

While the history of the property dates to the mid-nineteenth century when it was owned by James Fry and known for the purity of its spring waters, the period of significance associated with the Fry's Spring Beach Club is due to the continuous use of the site as a recreational area to the present. This period begins in the late nineteenth century with the advent of the streetcar and reaches its zenith in the 1940s and 1950s.

The advent of the streetcar brought people to Fry's Spring in seek of respite and remedy and drew the interest of the Jefferson Park Hotel and Land Improvement Company who, by 1900, had purchased 130 acres (including the spring) and erected the 100-room Albemarle (also known as the Jefferson Park) Hotel. Such an establishment attracted visitors from near and far. In order to provide more amenities for the visitors a dance pavilion was constructed on the site.

Ten years later, the hotel burned and it seemed as though the property would fall into oblivion. However in 1921, G. Russell Dettor purchased land to construct a large outdoor swimming pool on the property. Seeing an opportunity, by 1929 Dettor had purchased both the outdoor dance pavilion and the wooded park containing the original spring.

Dettor invested over \$100,000 in the property in the 1940s when he notably transformed the dance pavilion into the streamlined moderne ballroom. Fry's Spring Beach Club (then known as Dettor's Beach Club) became a popular venue for swing bands such as Guy Lombardo who were easily accommodated on the spacious stage of the new ballroom.

By the 1950s the beach club, now called Fry's Spring, was chartered as a private club in order to avoid restrictions placed on the sale of alcohol, and became known for its dining, dancing, swimming, tennis, and bridge facilities.<sup>viii</sup> In 1970 Dettor sold the club to an eight-member corporation who still owns and operates the members-only club today.

Some of the more interesting social history of the Fry's Spring Beach Club dates to the 1950s and 1960s. In 1952, bylaws clearly state that the club services only members of the white race.<sup>ix</sup> Despite this, the club has over 2,000 members in 1956.

In 1963, questions regarding membership and racial integration reached a breaking point when members of the board considered revoking the membership of local racial activist Paul Gaston due to his participation in demonstrations supporting integration at local establishments. Other club members, notably R. W. McGilvery, threatened to stop his family membership if Gaston's were to be revoked. He wrote, "This community, which has handled itself with dignity and respect for order in the trials of the

last few years, deserves better of you.’’<sup>x</sup> Gaston’s membership was not revoked but did result in strict regulations regarding off-site membership activities involving integration.<sup>xi</sup>

The debate regarding racial integration spilled into the 1970s when in 1972 the board approved a possibly integrated swim meet but in 1973 refused club use to an African-American organization.<sup>xii</sup>

In sum, this property encompasses high integrity due to its authentic interior spaces, continuous use, and social history.

**Legal Owner(s) of the Property** (For more than one owner, please use a separate sheet.)Mr. ☐ Mrs. ☐ Dr. ☐  
Miss ☐ Ms. ☐ Hon. ☐

Fry's Spring Beach Club, Inc.

(Name)

2512 Jefferson Park Ave.

(Address)

Charlottesville

(City)

VA

(State)

22903

(Zip Code)

fsbcmanager@gmail.com

(Email Address)

434-296-4181

(Daytime telephone including area code)

Owner's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**• • Signature required for processing all applications. • •**

In the event of corporate ownership you must provide the name and title of the appropriate contact person.

Contact person: Mr. Kacy Burnsed, President

Daytime Telephone: (434) 989-4326

**Applicant Information** (Individual completing form if other than legal owner of property)Mr. ☐ Mrs. ☐ Dr. ☐  
Miss ☐ Ms. ☒ Hon. ☐

Gina Haney

(Name)

807 Elliott Avenue

(Address)

Charlottesville

(City)

VA

(State)

22902

(Zip Code)

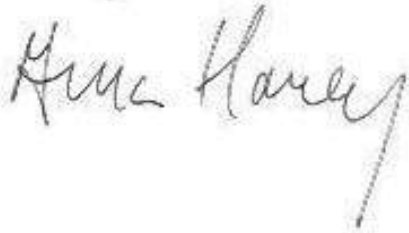
gina.haney4@gmail.com

(Email Address)

434-465-0884

(Daytime telephone including area code)

Applicant's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



Date: 11/30/13

**Notification**

In some circumstances, it may be necessary for the department to confer with or notify local officials of proposed listings of properties within their jurisdiction. In the following space, please provide the contact information for the local County Administrator or City Manager.

Mr. ☒ Mrs. ☐ Dr. ☐  
Miss ☐ Ms. ☐ Hon. ☐

Maurice Jones

(Name)

Charlottesville City Manager

(Position)

Charlottesville, VA

(Locality)

605 East Main Street

(Address)

Charlottesville

(City)

VA

(State)

22902

(Zip Code)

434-970-3101

(Daytime telephone including area code)

Please use the following space to explain why you are seeking an evaluation of this property.

**The Club is seeking evaluation of the property for local and state recognition of the resources as well as to seek eventual State Rehabilitation Tax Credits. Such credits would help the club to better maintain and utilize the resources.**

Would you be interested in the State and/or the Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credits? Yes x No ☐

Would you be interested in the easement program? Yes ☐ No x

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<sup>i</sup> Albemarle County Deed Book 176 pgs. 131-133.

<sup>ii</sup> Margaret T. Peters, "Fry's Spring—Charlottesville's Earliest Suburban Settlement," unpublished draft dated 17 May 2010, pg. 7.

<sup>iii</sup> Albemarle County Deed Book 227, pgs. 185-187. Various other deeds and conveyances are listed in this deed pertaining to the establishment of a swimming pool on the property in 1921.

<sup>iv</sup> Albemarle County Deed Book 346, pgs. 473-479.

<sup>v</sup> Albemarle County Deed Book 560, pgs. 595.

<sup>vi</sup> Albemarle County Deed Book 2013, pg. 1763

<sup>vii</sup> Fry's Spring Beach Club minutes 25 September 1958. At the time, these were viewed at the clubhouse, they have since been transferred to Alderman Library, University of Virginia.

<sup>viii</sup> Jamie Simpson, "Club Pools Memories for Milestone," *Daily Progress*, 9 June 1996, pg. A12.

<sup>ix</sup> Fry's Spring Beach Club Article VIII of bylaws 30 August 1952 stipulated:

"No person other than a member of the White Race shall be eligible for Membership in the Club, nor may they use the Club as a guest of any person or as a member or guest of any group or organization that may be permitted to use the Club."

<sup>x</sup>R. W. McGilvery, letter to Directors, Fry's Springs Beach Club, 19 June 1963. This item is found in the Fry's Spring Beach Club minutes books of 1963, no page number.

<sup>xi</sup>Fry's Spring Beach Club minutes 23 June 1963.

<sup>xii</sup> Fry's Spring Beach Club annual membership meeting September 1972, pg. 2.

Fry's Spring Beach Club minutes 14 February 1973.